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ABSTRACT

The possibility should be considered that English grammar has been misanalyzed for centuries because of grammarians' accepting fundamentally flawed assumptions about grammar and, even more so, about the history of English--and that this has resulted in a huge disconnect between English grammars and the genius of English that really exists. The development of the information age and of English as a world language means that such lapses have greater import than formerly. But what is available on the shelves has fallen into sufficient discredit for grammar to have forfeited its place in the curriculum, unrespected and little heeded by the brighter students. An adequate approach might offer some insight as to why "grammar gurus" unwittingly write things contrary to their own prescriptions. Many grammarians "lamely" resort to referring to good English as "standard English," as though there were an English language academy or other body authorized to "standardize" it. It is a vain and losing battle to contend against technically natural processes like making "lay" a contraponent, making "loan" a causative verb, and using "less" for "fewer." (Contains 13 notes.) (RS)

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HOW GRAMMARS OF ENGLISH HAVE MISSED THE BOAT

There's been more flummoxing than meets the eye

by

Charles-James N. Bailey

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There's been more flummoxing than meets the eye

Charles-James N. Bailey

Consider the possibility that English grammar has been misanalysed for centuries because of grammarians' accepting fundamentally flawed assumptions about grammar and, even more so, about the history of English—and that this has resulted in a huge disconnect between English grammars and the genius of the English that really exists. The development of the information age and of English as a world language means that such lapses have greater import than formerly. But what is available on the shelves has fallen into sufficient discredit for grammar to have forfeited its place in the curriculum, unrespected and little heeded by the brighter students.

Consider the English pronoun pairs, **her : she**, **him : he**, **me : I**, **us : we**, and **them : they**. It is easy to show that the uses of these paired forms are not directly related to functional (subject and object) "cases" in the manner of Latin and Anglo-Saxon, but only in a very round-about way that partially reminds one of the Romance languages. If the educated generally say a rather Frenchified "Martha and myself arrived late" and "That's me" (Marilyn Monroe was made to sound silly by saying "That's I!"), why do grammarians ignore the significance of such usages for the *system* of English? Aren't they interested in why quasi-French usages like "Me and my father cleaned the house up today"—typical of that legendary 13¾-year-old British adolescent, Adrian Mole—are so ineradicable?

Shouldn't your grammar offer you some hint of an explanation for usages of pronoun forms in the English of educated people—individuals who would never say **to I**, **to she**, or **for we**—but who nevertheless use constructs like the following: **to she and I**; **Let's you and I do it**; **to she who knows**; **on we in Europe**; and "for we Europeans"—the last from the mouth of a British prime minister and former university professor? Shouldn't a grammar offer some hint of a reason why many educated speakers insist that **for her and me** is *un*grammatical? Grammarians can hardly avoid conceding that many usages violating their prescribed "case" rules (like "Who'll do it if not **me**?" and "Someone—probably **me**—will do it") are in fact quite unexceptionable. To contend that these deeply ingrained, ineradicable, and Romance-derived usages are contrary to the genius of English

amounts to no more than the unconvincing arguments of a seriously defective analysis. The system, *a very strict one*, of real English grammar is missing from the books.[1] An adequate approach might offer some insight into why grammar gurus unwittingly write things contrary to their own prescriptions like "the one whom the residents of that settlement had assured me would repair it" and "It was for whomever over there wanted to win quick acclaim." Even the 1611 Bible has the Lord making a grammatical error in "**Whom** say ye that I am?" When a columnist (in an international newspaper) wrote about problems having to do with "instability in [Europe's] new currency, **with who consulting whom** about what to do," he evidently thought of all that follows **with** as being a *quoted* object of the preposition. Latish **whom** is not the Anglo-Saxon *dative*; it got a new, unsystematic **-m** like the Latin accusative. Though **whom** has never been integrated, the French for **him** and **them** suggest why these forms endure.

If your grammar calls **makes** a "present tense" in "This factory **makes** machines"—say, on Saturday night when the place is closed—is that a designation that makes sense? Would it not imply contradictions—which are in fact absent—in "She **speaks** Japanese but she**'s speaking** English" and in "He **comes** from Honolulu but he**'s coming** from Hilo"? Isn't there a difference between "The child **is** good" and "The child**'s being good** now" such that there is no contradiction in saying, "The child**'s good** in the mornings, but she **isn't being good** now"? Would a grammar that calls **makes**, **speaks**, and **comes** "presents" be expected to do any better with the two posterior uses in "The president **speaks** at ten tonight" and (with different force) "When she **speaks** at the meeting tomorrow, . . ."? Treating **speaks** as a present in "Hamlet **speaks** to Ophelia in this scene," "St. Paul **speaks** of that in Galatians," and "She **speaks** about that every time I go there" conflicts with the obvious. (In "He smokes now," **now** means "nowadays.") Doesn't the reader know a language studied by many Americans in which **speaks** would be a subjunctive in the context found in "Make sure [a causative expression] that your report **speaks** directly to the issue"—and in several other contexts?

Does your grammar of choice tell you why **was being aimed at** (in "It was being aimed at") gets changed to **was getting aimed at** in "It was getting aimed at for a take-over next month"; and why **got shot** (in "He got shot yesterday") switches to **was being shot** in "He was being shot at dawn the next day"? You can test your grammar by checking whether it offers a subjective, *ad hoc* listing of usages in place of *grammatical* explanations, say, for the difference between

Don't *get* caught (or **Don't *be* caught doing that!**) and **Don'tchu *be* caught now!** (or **Don'tchu *get* caught doing that!**).

Calling the posterior forms, **will** and **be gonna** (so written to distinguish it from the literal sense of **be going to**) "future tenses" leaves one wondering how it is possible to find a future in **was gonna leave yesterday**, seeing that yesterday is past; and why **now** sounds all right in "They'll **now** be arriving late." These are not minor issues. What "tense" is found in "Those problems **had been going to have been getting investigated** by now"? In the improbable event that your grammar tells you why—or even that—**was gonna rain** usually gets changed to **would rain** in an indirect quotation, does it explain *that*, let alone *why*, we negate **It's gonna rain** with **It won't rain** and **It'll rain** with **It's not gonna rain**?[2] Why is **be gonna** avoided in the main clause of "If it arrives safely, we'll let you know"?

Why do we avoid both **be gonna** or **will** in "If the president **speaks** tomorrow, we'll know the answer," except in infrequent instances when we have good reason to presume that the posterior event is pretty much of a sure thing? The foreigner's "When she **will speak**" sounds bizarre for "When she **speaks**." (The environment here, technically called the *surrealis* environment, is different from the plain environment of "She **speaks** tomorrow," where **speaks** indicates a routine or scheduled event or state. The nine posterior modalities of English indicate, in non-*surrealis* uses, progressively greater degrees of predictability.) We say, "After (*or* before) she **speaks**, the committee **will** meet," "**Tell** whoever **speaks** at tonight's session about it because he **will** want to know," "Till she **speaks** about it, we **won't** know," and "Whoever **speaks** tonight **will** announce the result as soon as he **speaks**." Are you told what is systematically going on here—what categories belong to the *surrealis* environment and what is common to them? Are you told why it is un-English to say "**To speak** that way **is being** cool"—let alone why the replacement of **is being** in this example with the class of verb modalities partially represented by **is**, **has been**, **will be**, **may be**, or **might be** makes the example grammatically acceptable? Of course, there's nothing wrong with saying, "**Speaking** that way **is being** (regarded as) cool." The correct analysis of this solves the next quandary.

What *grammatical* grounds does your grammar give for the acceptability of "As long as I can remember, she **has** always **done** that at ten o'clock" and "This is the first time it **has been done** at ten o'clock" in view of the fact that "She **has done** that at ten o'clock" is un-English? Although English does not lack a strict system of grammar, what that system is is far from being transparent in grammars

that call **has stood** a "present perfect" in "That building has stood for ten years [and is likely to last a lot longer]."[3] This action or state cannot be a "perfect" since it has not been completed but is continuing in the present, though it doesn't have to do so for it to be a present-anterior. The English present-anterior modality refers to actions or states occurring (without necessarily being concluded) in a block of time that *includes* the present, whereas a perfect is an event or state "completed" at no specific time within a block of past time lasting up to, but not including, the present. This explains why people are now saying, "I just did it"—which is more logical than using a past for the present-anterior in "I didn't do it yet" and "I did it already." Grammars are defective in failing to give some hint of the two or three striking behaviors common to the following (*irrealis*) categories: timeless (exochronous) forms (e.g. **speaks**), anteriors (formed on **have**), posteriors (nine in English *vs.* two in Latin and three in French), imperatives, infinitives, and modal verbs.

One of the more widely used books on grammar (a fairly recent British example) calls a form like **was standing** a past-continuous tense. Yet, this form is utterly out of place (the corresponding Romance form is also strange, as also is English **used to stand**) in continuous past examples like "Troy was standing 600 years." Why is "I hear [or "see"] it" not a so-called present-continuous tense? (Actually, it's not even a tense: It is a modality.) The grammar just referred to achieves the ridiculous in pointing out that a so-called past-continuous verb form "can also be a way of showing your interest in the other person" and "to show a change of mind"! But can't all of the other time forms of the verb do the same things (cf. "I'd been planning to stay home this afternoon, but I won't")? Whatever happened to *grammatical* reasons for using a form? Even if the approach just cited could go so far as to list *all* of the usages of every verb form, that would still fall short of being an analysis or a grammar!

Does your favorite grammar explain the *grammatical* reason why **you'll have to** is politer than **you must** and why **you can** is politer than **you may**? You should check whether your grammar makes clear —something that those who understand what is going on in English will be clear about—why the three non-posterior **woulds**[4] can be pasts, while a posterior **would** cannot function as a past (but only as a past-posterior or [non-past] conditional). Also to be checked is whether your grammar helps foreign teachers and learners of English to see what is so gratingly wrong when they say **until** or **till** instead of **by** in contexts like "They will begin it till ten o'clock" and "They will kill the hen till ten o'clock"—even though there is no problem in

saying (a) "They will kill *hens* till ten o'clock," (b) "She is *not* gonna kill the hen till ten o'clock," (c) "He was gonna kill *time* until ten o'clock," and (d) (one sense of) "Lock the *door* till ten o'clock"—*all of which are good English*![5]

A grammar should provide *grammatical* reasons for the difference between **doesn't need to** and **needn't** as well as that between **don't have** and **haven't**. (But **don't have to** = **haven't got to**.) And it ought to tell a reader *why* **needn't** occurs in the same class of environments as those in which **could** can be a true past—equivalent in sense to "was/were able." (**Could stay** is not equivalent to "was/were able to stay" except in the special environment of an indirect quotation.)

Consider **should**, which is usually dubitative (as in "If we **should** be late, . . .") when not obligative—both are *irrealis*—but is *factual* in "They were surprised and disgusted that he **should** say such things"—something that would not be said unless the "he" in question *really was saying* such things. After all, even a child's Uncle Remus stories are full of examples of factual **should**; e.g. "An' who **should** 'e meet but Brer Fox!" A reliable grammar should tell you about the four uses of **should**—*what* they are, *how* they are to be analysed, *where* they occur, and *why* they differ. You can test whether, in an example like "It was for the good of the country that she not **remain**," your grammatical authority misnames the deletion of **should** (before **remain**, which explains its lack of inflection) a "subjunctive"—despite the logic by which the processual modality of **should**-DELETION explains three anomalies that no subjunctive, past or present, can account for. (See more on this analysis below.)

Check what your favorite grammar has to say about the difference between **are** or **am** and **be** in "Why don't you just **be** more attentive?" as well as "If you (**don't**) **be** good tomorrow, . . ." and "I always just **be** myself whenever she's around"—where **be** says more than **are** and **am**? Is your grammar's answer satisfactory to you? Does it state the meaning of *this* **be** and the conditions for its use? Does it misname this **be** a "subjunctive"?

Consider the difference between **in** and **into** in "I put my money **in** my safe, but she put hers **into** stocks and bonds" and in "When the ball flew **in** the window, he flew **into** a rage." In typical examples,[6] **into** signals an ontological or situational change—something very different from the change of place found in Germanic usage[7] but not lacking in affinities with French **dans** and **en**. Consider now the difference between prepositional and postpositional **by**, **in**, etc. We always prepose **by** and **in** in "By what right are they claiming that?" (contrast un-English "What right . . . by?") or "By how many inches is

she taller than me?" (cf. unacceptable "How many inches . . . by?"), and "In what instances [or ways] are they different?" (contrast un-English "What instances [or ways] . . . in?"). And so with other prepositions.[8] The foregoing examples contrast with the *un*foregrounded **by** and **in** that we naturally prefer in "What time have we got to be home by?" and "What kind of trouble are they in?" And so with most other postpositions. An infelicitous example by a professional columnist, recently encountered, shows how the "grammaticality" of current grammars misses the boat: "[It] identifies **in** what relation they stand" —where **in** needs to come at the end.

The difference between placing a preposition before a WH-pronoun and leaving it in place as a postposition is something that grammars ought not to neglect but explain. (Exceptions like **during**, **concerning**, **except**, and **according to** have a ready explanation that your grammar should tell you about.) Though foregrounding a preposition where we don't have to do so feels unnatural (and in fact violates an implicational universal long known from work by H. J. Greenberg), it can be done to marker insinuations (like resignation; see n. 8).

Where preposing is not used to marker irony, frustration, or some other insinuation, it can be used to create a put-down (as in "With whom do you wish to speak?" instead of the affable educated "Who d'you wanna talk to?") or to avoid a succession of two prepositions belonging to *different* clauses. Just as we use **of** in deviation from what would be a normal **'s**[9] in order to avoid awkward constructs, so we prepose *other* postpositions to avoid, say, the awkwardness arising from the embedding of one relative clause within another—as in "the program that you were determined to involve all of the projects that they came up with in." Needlessly preposing adpositions is otherwise unnatural enough to entrap speakers in a redundancy as old as Malory—like this example out of dozens from the BBC: "the one **of** whom he took advantage **of**."

A half-way adequate grammar should tell you why putting a preposition at the beginning of its clause is un-English twice over in "**In** which subjects they excel is **about** what her report is." Following current rules of grammar, you will commit three violations of proper usage in preposing **on** in "We wondered about **on** what her reports were." Though the use of **from where?** (in direct or indirect questions) is a common error among foreigners, non-interrogative **from where** is all right in "I flew to Honolulu, from where I proceeded by water to Hilo." It's too bad that a "Pygmalion"—which is to say, a bookish and in fact alien-sounding—approach requires moving prepo-

sitions along with their WH-pronoun objects to the beginning of their clauses, *even* in the unacceptable examples mentioned here.

Consider the difference in the uses of partially similar adverb forms—**hard** : **hardly**, **most** : **mostly**, **very** : **verily**, **just** : **justly**, **bloody** : **bloodily**, **right** : **rightly**, **clear** : **clearly**, **stark** : **starkly**, **pretty** : **prettily**, **sure** : **surely**, **awful** : **awfully**, etc.[10] Your grammar should explain the difference between "It's sure concealed" and "It's surely concealed"—and why it sounds silly to reply to normal requests with "Surely"! Being **plain stupid** is not the same as being **plainly stupid**; and being **real special** is different from being **really (and truly) special**. Your grammar should also clarify why **pretty ugly**, **bloody neat**, and **jolly sad** are not contradictory.

And shouldn't your grammar give you the *grammatical* reason for why there is no contradiction in "That irresponsible person was the person responsible" or "The space available was less than the available space" . . . and why "He's no teacher" is said of one who in fact *is* a teacher—though "She isn't a teacher" refers to one who really isn't a teacher? And aren't these last two examples paralleled by "They're no better than us" and "They aren't better than us"?—where **no better** invites the inference that both parties are not very good, whereas **not better** lacks this inference? Note that in "They're no more stupid than us," there is no suggestion that either party is stupid.

Does your grammar help you understand the error in an editorial of a prestigious New York newspaper—the use of **were** instead of expected **had been** or (if not explicitly counterfactual) **was**—in "Mr. Starr should not have taken it unless he **were** willing to see it through"? And how about the **may** in "If they would've [*for* **had**] installed a smoke detector, this disaster **may** not have happened"—which makes even less sense than the televangelist's **might** in "Let us pray that this child **might** receive healing"—itself pretty bizarre? Your grammar may not inform you what the two environments are in which **'d** can stand for **did** and **'s** can stand for **does**—or the context in which **'ve** is pronounced with a weak vowel (e.g. **had to've**, **may've**) or where **'ve** (like unstressed **of**) loses its "v" (e.g. **coulda, musta**); note how **'ve** gets entirely lost in normal tempos in "You 0 gotta be joking." What does your grammar tell you the stress conditions are for *excepting* an **-ed** that has normally got a silent "e" from becoming **-ëd** before **-ness** and **-ly**, as in **markëdness** and in **resignëdly** and **avowëdly** but not in **offeredness** or **empassionedly**?

Does your grammar clarify why **'d** gets deleted in "You['d] better"—as the result of its first being assimilated to certain following consonants, after which the like consonants (two **b**'s in **you'b better**)

get simplified to a single one in allegro speaking tempos? If your grammar doesn't clarify this, it can hardly guide you to an understanding of why, in uttering a past counterfactual **if**-clause, we lose, or rather avoid losing **'d** in "If we['d] been there yesterday" by strengthening it to **had've**, **hadda**, or just **'da** (the British playwright, D. M. Storey writes "had have" in *Home*). We don't mind the loss of **'d** in an "unmarked" context like "You **Ø** better." If the grounds for the strengthening of **'d** to avoid its loss in a past counterfactual conditional are pronunciational, the *grammatical* teleology of the solution achieved lies in what linguists call *constructional iconism*—longer forms being needed to marker more semantically complex constructs. To sum up, your grammar ought to account for the *cause* and the grammatical *purpose* of **hadda** and **'da**—i.e. **had've**—in past counterfactual hypothesis clauses.[11]

You can test your grammar's logic by checking whether it sets up an entire category—a mythical "subjunctive mode"—on the basis of the (usually optional) *re-spelling* of a *single* verb—viz. of **was** to **were**—as in "I wish she were/was here." (The re-spelling is obligatory in "Were she here now, . . .," but is of course not appropriate in "If he was at home yesterday, . . ."—an open conditional). You can test your grammar's logic also by checking whether it calls the postposition **'s** in **the person I spoke to's home town** a "possessive" (does she "possess" her home town?) and even a "case" ending (if so, on what word?). While some grammars distinguish the sense of "Jane and Gerri's books" from that of "Jane's and Gerri's books," the ones the writer is familiar with do not clarify why "Don and my books" is un-English ("Don and I's books" has been heard on television), though "Don's and his books" is all right.[12]

Don't readers sometimes wonder why grammarians and grammar gurus online and offline who are unaware of the revolution taking place in our understanding of the history of English and its grammar force our language into an alien mould? Wasn't the dummy-**of** in **outside of** (which simply calques French **hors de** and is quite consistent with the English system) denounced simply for not being Germanic (Anglo-Saxon)? Don't readers see any affinity between **like**—in "I need that **like** I need a hole in the head" or "We made it **like** they wanted it," usages often denounced by grammarians—and **comme** in French *comme il faut*, etc.? Isn't un-Germanic "He's taller than **me**" French-like? Doesn't a moment's glance at the way French forms comparatives and superlatives suggest why English writers use the superlative in "That's **the best** of the two"?

Presented with organized examples of many of the problems discussed here, even children can deduce the rules that they unconsciously follow, though they of course cannot explain them.

Grammarians seem to think that English is a lineal descendent of Anglo-Saxon because both were spoken on the same territory, though such reasoning would mean that English in Ireland descends from Gaelic! The basic failing stems from relying on lists of building blocks—easily borrowed words—instead of the unborrowable architecture of the language. It stems from treating as *unborrowed* what are really calques—i.e. loan words (especially functor words) *used in the functions or senses* of words belonging to another language system; in short, it stems from treating such items on the basis of their *derivation* instead of on the basis of their *functioning* in the *system*. Like all new languages a-borning, Middle English got its words wherever it could; basic words are the most borrowable thing in languages. But the *system* of English grew out of the language spoken by all of the bishops and all but one of the nobility of England; it simply defies all sociolinguistic credibility to suppose that the language of the underclass should have (except with respect to prosodics, e.g. intonation) prevailed over that of the gentry; what mattered was the "quality," not the quantity, of ethnic groupings. The language of the Norman rulers bears a relation to Middle English that exhibits parallels with the way modern English is related to her many daughter languages in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

❁

Many grammarians lamely resort to referring to good English as "standard English," as though there were an English language academy (something rejected by Samuel Johnson as contrary to the freedom of the English) or other body authorized to "standardize" it, as though the editors of three of the best-known dictionaries in England subsequent to Johnson's *hadn't* declined to endorse a "standard(ized)" English! Of all people, grammarians should know enough about the genius of English to avoid taking refuge in such misleading rubbish as a standard English (an artifice designed to foster the hint of privileged access to *penetralia* that others are thus effectively excluded from?).

While it is quite in order to protest against usages that wantonly make the grammar inconsistent, it is also in order to accept usages that accord with the genius of a language (how can a usage be wrong in English if it is right in other languages, e.g. French?). It is a vain and losing battle to contend against technically natural processes like making **lay** a contraponent (active in form, passive or reflexive in sense) verb (as most people do), making **loan** a causative verb (as is also

widespread), and using **less** for **fewer**. Putting **as** between the two objects of **consider** and **name** (but not of **call**) simply follows the analogy of **regard**. But what of the tag, **aren't I?** It was re-formed from **ain't I?** at a time when it had been forgotten that an increasingly proscribed **ain't** derives from **am not** as well as **aren't**. The widespread usage of **aren't I?** by educated speakers can hardly paper over the evident fact that it violates every concept of system. The Irish have neatly solved the problem with **am'nt I?**—with **-'nt** for **-n't**, as in (increasingly rare) **mayn't** (pronounced "may'nt") and creole **did'nt**.

Processual modalities are naturally ruled out of the prevailing static-reic approach to grammar. (English grammar has got eight processual modalities.) A good example is the TEMPORAL THROW-BACK in "If they **were** here *now*, . . . " and in "If they **had been** here *yesterday*, . . ." This processual modality makes a statement less assertive; in the *surrealis* environment, it conveys counterfactual force in real past or present time, dubitative or counterexpectative force in posterior time. To treat the *process* of throwing back time as a *thing*—a misnamed "subjunctive"—evinces a deplorably static philosophy of language.

When grammarians leave aside *lists* of unconnected items and concentrate on unborrowable *systematic structures*, they will abandon that mythical "subjunctive" that frightens school children and needlessly adds to the inventory of items that they're expected to master. Consider the example given earlier: "It was for the good of the country that she not **remain**." There are at least four anomalies here, including the lack of a sequencing of time forms (which an alleged subjunctive cannot explain, inasmuch as the long defunct subjunctive obeyed this principle); the absence of **do**-SUPPORT with **not**; the lack of an inflection on **remain**; and the optional use of **should** before **remain**. We explain the usage without further ado when we indicate the results of the processual modality of **should**-DELETION with the notation **S** (a virtual **should**) playing the same rôles that the deleted **should** would play—viz. the rôles of having an infinitive complement and of not taking **do**-SUPPORT when negated. **S** thus functions to *preserve the structure* and to obviate an *unsystematic* "subjunctive." Any analysis requires stating that the construct occurs after expressions of necessity and volition and those of propriety and importance.

A similar technique eliminates *unnecessary building blocks*—e.g. contradictions like adverbial nouns (including "datives") and substantival adjectives. So-called adverbial nouns are really adverbial prepositional phrases with deleted prepositions—indicated by **P** in "She wrote **P** me twice," "We stayed **P** home," and "They did it **P** my way"; most are *measurements*, as in "Yesterday, we worked **P** eight

hours." The virtual preposition functions just like **to**, **at**, **in**, and **for** in the preceding examples. (We don't need to know which prepositions have been deleted—only that **P** has got the properties of a deleted preposition. In languages with nominals inflected for case, **P** governs the case of its object nominal.) As for "substantival adjectives," consider **the good** in "**The good O is** what we seek" and in "**The good O do** not always have the best luck"—where **O** represents deleted **one** and **ones**, respectively, or quasipronominal **thing** and **people**. Since **O** retains the properties of the deleted nominal, the difference between singular **is** and plural **do** in the examples just given goes with the fact that a predicate will agree with the grammatical number of the deleted subject that **O** virtualizes. Simple devices of this sort preserve grammatical structure and eliminate unnecessary and unsystematic elements. The longish booklet mentioned in n. 1 discusses the structure-preserving **X** that triggers postposing of the adjective in *person responsible* ***X*** and *space available* ***X*** (in both of which **X** = "for that [purpose]") as well as in *the goals already achieved* ***X*** (where **X** = "by someone/something"). The rule—very different from the one German uses to avoid interposing the modifier of an adjective between it and the noun it modifies—can be inferred from a comparison of French and English examples: With *une très longue table* "a very long table," contrast the French and English: *une table plus longue de trois mètres* "a table longer by three meters" (cf. "a table three meters *in length*).

The grammar is made more rational also with rules like the "raising" of **not** with cognitive verbs—which explains why "We didn't think that many attended" means "We thought that few attended," given that **few** = "not many." (**Only** may also be raised; it is treated as a negative in other grammatical rules.)[13] Consider raising also in **mustn't stay**. It is no trivial matter that, unlike German *muß nicht bleiben*, the negative enclitic on **mustn't** resembles the negatives in French **il ne faut pas rester** in that it and they negate the complementary infinitive of the main verb rather than the main verb itself. In short, **not** is "raised" from **rester** or **stay** to become attached to **faut** or **must**. Can one persuade oneself that this and many other parts of the French system could get borrowed into English the way basic words can?

The facts are highly compelling for those who possess sufficient mental flexibility to abandon a focus on the "material" provenance of, say, early English **the which** or **musn't**—as well as the silly but widespread idea that basic words don't get easily borrowed—so as to view the forms in terms of what they do *grammatically*.

NOTES

[1]The theoretical basis of the analysis of English that the writer holds to be correct is found in his *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis* (Oxford University Press, 1996), esp. Chaps. 6 and 10. The answers to the questions raised in the present writing—and many others that the usual grammars do not address and very likely are unaware of—are answered less technically in the forthcoming booklet by Orchid Land Publications, *How it has gone so wrong with English grammars*.

[2]The technical term for the reversals heard in "her and myself" [for non-conjoined subject "she" + non-conjoined subject "I"], in "to she and I," and in reversals of the passivizing and posterior auxiliary verbs is *W. Mayerthaler's Principle of reversals in marked categories and environments*. See my *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis* and *Variation in the data* (Orchid Land Publications, 1992).

[3]One can also say **has been standing** here; French, German, and most other languages would use their *presents* here.

[4]Volitional ("be willing, insist on, persist in"), epistemic/presumptive (used as a past only in mind-reading quotations, as in "She would've arrived there by now, he mused"), and characterizing (stronger than habitual "used to").

[5]See *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis*, pp. 187-191.

[6]But not in every one of the four classes of **into**-usage; see my *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis*, pp. 185-6. A non-motion example is **look in** (a place) *vs.* ***look into*** (a matter).

[7]Consider why Germans speaking English say "involve into" as well as "evolve into"?

[8]Contrast **Who to?, Who by?, What with?, What on?**, etc. Note that formal **why?** has got two senses—the causal and the purposive—which in ordinary educated English are, respectively, **How come?** and **What for?** (**For what?** is used to express an insinuation like the resignation conveyed in "What's the point?" or "What good would that do?"). An example with a compound preposition is: "Whose house did his car stop in front of?"; cf. stilted "In front of whose house did his car stop?"

[9]See *Variation in the data*, pp. 104-108.

[10]Cf. in earlier English **passing** in **passing strange** and **exceeding** for current **exceedingly** as well as **full** in **full well** (see *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis*, p. 178).

[11]Both French and German "surcomposite" verb forms have different uses from the uses of their formal parallels in English.

[12]See *Variation in the data*, p. 100.

[13]While we cannot say "It need (to) be shortened," there is no problem with "It need only be shortened"—which is comparable with "It need not be shortened." Further, verb-subject order occurs after an initial construct containing **only** in "From **only** one person have they learned that" just as it does after one with **no** or **not**, as in "From **not** just one or two persons have they learned that."

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